



CAES is now administering NEUP, a federal program that funds nuclear energy research, equipment upgrades and scholarships and fellowships at U.S. colleges and universities.

DOE program to bolster nuclear renaissance

by [Kortny Rolston](#), *INL Communications & Public Affairs*

The United States is on the verge of a nuclear renaissance, and the Center for Advanced Energy Studies is helping bolster the country's nuclear research and development and students entering the high-demand field.

CAES, a partnership between Idaho National Laboratory and the state's three public research universities, is now administering the Nuclear Energy University Programs (NEUP) for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy.

Shane Johnson, DOE's acting assistant secretary for nuclear energy, said they asked CAES to run the program because of its strong track record of partnering with universities.

"We want this organization representing the Department of Energy to the rest of the nation's university systems," Johnson told the crowd at CAES' Feb. 20 building dedication.

NEUP funds nuclear energy research at U.S. universities and provides scholarships and fellowships to nuclear science students. It also pays for equipment and infrastructure upgrades at colleges and universities to improve their ability to conduct cutting-edge research and development.

NEUP is making more than \$34 million available this fiscal year.

Proposals for the R&D arm of the program were due March 16. The call focused on research needs and priorities for these programs: Advanced Fuel Cycle Initiative (AFCI), Next Generation Nuclear Plant (Gen IV), Nuclear Hydrogen Initiative (NHI) and Light Water Reactor Sustainability (LWRS).

DOE NE will announce which proposals are being funded on May 1.

As the nuclear renaissance has accelerated the call to train more nuclear scientists, engineers and reactor operators, NEUP seeks to align the nuclear energy research and development being conducted at U.S. universities with DOE's mission and to increase the number of students studying nuclear science and engineering.

According to the Nuclear Energy Institute, about half of the nuclear industry's work force will be eligible to retire during the next 10 years.

"The gap is on both ends of the life cycle," CAES Deputy Director Oren Hester said. "There aren't as many nuclear science and engineering students out there and a lot of the workers are baby boomers getting ready to retire."

CAES is part of the agency's response to the recent interest in nuclear energy. After years on the sidelines, nuclear energy has re-emerged as a viable path to America's energy independence. In 2008 alone, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission received 12 license applications for new nuclear power plants in the U.S. In 2007, it got five.

CAES will play a central role in stimulating research and revitalizing the nuclear workforce through NEUP.

Visit the [NEUP](#) website.

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The new CAES facility in Idaho Falls was dedicated on Feb. 20, 2009.